SHAHAPTIN INDIAN LANGUAGE 1 & II Virginia Beavert, Developer-Instructor Heritage College, Toppenish, WA 98948

SP96

THE SCHXUUP-TASH: THE PAINTED ROCKS" OF NACHES.

by Chief Slusk in, 1917 interview at Awatam

No one knows how old the Schxdup-tash are, nor what they mean. Schxuup is an unexplained experience of sensing or seeing the movement of an intangible figure which is impossible to explain, and for the listener to perceive. This <u>place</u> is where you can sense an unexplained presence, but you can't see it nor can you explain this feeling. at First ( Long time ago)

The Milma-ma (Old People) tell us, " Uuyt (the first time), niipt +pap (two hands) were painted during the night, These hands were seen maaysx maytski (the next morning). After the hands, there were ts'illts'iii (circles) resembling heads; just like they are today.

There was a nchii ya-waynat (big flood) here, and after that when Man came, it was then that Schxuup-tash was painted. It was tk'ini (looked upon) as tamánwit ( law) for the Yakimas. They came sts'átpa (in the night) and painted the hands. Then the other paintings were made. There were times when they were repainted in bright colors. After the Shuyapus) (White men) came, the paintings were stopped.

The people who made the schxuup-tash were adult little people. No one actually knew where they lived. Someone would get a glimpse of one standing way up on top of the cliff, like a lawiishk'ishish (shadow )seen after anáshtipa the (sun went down), or before sunup in the morning. Anyone, who saw them, would soon die. No one wanted to see them. It brought death(-tl'yawit).

Just west of the cliff, where the pictures are, before you reach the bridge, on the Naxchiish River, up against the bluff there was a big t'a t aa pshwa (flat rock). On it were five k'usi-in-mi watiksh (horses hoof prints). One large, two not large, two, small, not so large. The large hoof print was the talagyi (stallion), the medium one was ayatúks (mare); the smallest prints were k'ayik (colt). In these five hoof prints was the prediction (tiixwat) that the Indians would raise horses all over this part of the land. That rock with hoof tracks may still be there unless someone took it away or blasted it to pieces. It should still be there.

Kusii-nmi

tieton

Nuwaytat was a child when she/accompanied her parents to hunt, fish and dig roots in the mountains in the Tayt+n and upper Naxchiish area, when she saw the P'ukt'uk -nim (Rock Pictographs). She said, "small children were often left among rocks at the cliff, at night, in hopes that they might see one of those watit'aas." When the Watit'aas communicated with the child, he or she was given this power by the "little people, and they had strong tamanwas (medicine power). It was good for a child of about five or six years to see the watit'aas, but it was death for a grown person.

"Before the white people settled around here, no one could destroy the P'uk t'uk nim. If the paint was rubbed off, or smeared with mud, the next morning it would be all fresh and bright as ever. The Little Watit'aas watched over the painted rocks and the markings, and they never let them grow dim. It is too bad that the white people are destroying the P'uk-t'uk-nim. The tamanwit ( law ) of my people was painted on those rocks by the Watitaas, the Ancient People."

There are many signs left by these Little People all over, in our canyons, along the Nch'i Wana (Columbia River) rock cliffs, and other places where they left their picture-writing on the rocks. No one can interpret their meaning but it is believed they were left there for a reason.

Slusk in

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Tamanwit (created) 3-12-96
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Refers to following what
you learned from your

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